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## **WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PERMIT INFORMATION**

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your interest in wildlife rehabilitation. There are many steps involved in order to obtain a rehabilitation permit. The first step is to contact a rehabilitator and volunteer to begin a one- (1) year apprenticeship in order to obtain the necessary experience. When you begin the apprenticeship, the licensed rehabilitator will forward a letter to the Division of Fish and Wildlife (Division), within 30 days, stating your name, full mailing address, telephone number and starting day. Please note that wildlife rehabilitators are under no obligation to take on an apprentice. The only exception to this apprenticeship period is for a licensed wildlife rehabilitator from another state that moves into New Jersey. Pending review of their existing permits, we may issue these permits without the required apprenticeship period and associated letters of recommendation.

In New Jersey, there are three basic types of wildlife rehabilitators/cooperators - avian, mammal and reptile. However, several rehabilitators are licensed for multiple types.

The goal of the rehabilitation program is to release injured and/or orphaned wildlife "back to the wild". Animals that are injured beyond repair or behaviorally cannot be released are to be euthanized. Rehabilitators with appropriate scientific or education permits, may apply for permission to maintain non-releasable animals for educational purposes or transfer them to individuals who have the appropriate state and federal education permits providing they have permission from the state and/or federal government. In these cases, the individual must meet the criteria for the educational permit.

Wildlife rehabilitators cannot charge a fee for their services; however, they may accept donations and apply for 501-3c non-profit status. The rehabilitator must absorb all expenses related to rehabilitation.

Many states now require basic training, written and/or oral testing and continuous education. New Jersey is also preparing to initiate such requirements. Therefore, requirements are subject to change.

The following is the basic criteria to apply for and maintain a rehabilitation permit:

- Apprenticeship – completion of a one year minimum apprenticeship with a licensed rehabilitator. The number of hours per day of week/month and other details of the apprenticeship are to be worked out between the apprentice and the sponsor, but the minimum requirement is four (4) hours per week. It is extremely important that the apprentice be exposed to a complete calendar year of experience.
- Letter of Recommendation – from the sponsor who details the proficiency with regards to the species and type of care.
- Veterinary Letter of Support – from a veterinarian that is willing to work with you and the species for which you are applying. Be advised that veterinarians may, and often do, charge for their services.
- Interview/Questionnaire/Testing – which measure the knowledge of various aspects of rehabilitation, as well as, required description of caging and facility.
- Federal Permits – as required for migratory birds
- Facility Inspection – successful inspection of proposed facility. The facility must meet the requirements to successfully rehabilitate the species requested.
- Annual Report and Renewal Form – must be completed annually and submitted with required documentation.
- Continuous Education – Participation in a minimum of one (1) continuous wildlife rehabilitation education program each year.

Rehabilitation permits are currently issued for one (1) calendar year and all permits expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> each year. An annual report and renewal form must be submitted to the Division by January 15<sup>th</sup> along with the required documentation each year in order to renew your permit and continue rehabilitating wildlife.

Be advised your local community may not permit a wildlife rehabilitation program in your area. You should contact your local municipality regarding such regulations.

Below you will find links to vital information pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation in New Jersey. It is in your best interest to begin reviewing these documents in conjunction with your apprenticeship so that you may be better prepared for the questionnaire, interview and/or written testing program.

I hope you follow through on the apprenticeship so that you may continue to advance into your own wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Respectfully,

Amy Wells  
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